

Accessibility

(1) A measure of the ability or ease of all people to travel among various origins and destinations; (2) The extent to which facilities are free of barriers and usable by mobility-disabled persons, including wheelchair users; (3) In common usage, the ability of the physically-disabled to use transit.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)

Federal civil rights law that assures persons with disabilities equal opportunity to fully participate in society, the ability to live independently, and the ability to be economically sufficient.

Alternative Fuel

A fuel with lower polluting air emissions than traditional diesel—includes alcohol fuels, hybrid-electric, mineral fuels, methanol, propane, hydrogen, compressed (CNG) and liquefied (LNG) natural gas.

Articulated Bus

A longer, high-capacity bus or trolleybus that has the rear body section or sections flexibly but permanently connected to the forward section. The arrangement allows the vehicle to bend at curves and yet have no interior barrier to movement between the sections.

Automatic Passenger Counter (APC)

An automated means for collecting data on passenger boardings and alightings by time and location.

Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL)

Transponders that are installed in buses or vehicles in a transit fleet that provide real-time, GPS navigational locations of transit vehicles at all times. Location information can be monitored by transit dispatch to maintain optimal route efficiency.

Bus

A self-propelled, rubber-tired road vehicle designed to carry a substantial number of passengers, commonly operated on streets and highways. A bus has enough headroom to allow passengers to stand upright after entering. Sometimes referred to as a “coach” or “motorcoach.”

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

An express service by bus that usually serves two destinations without stops in between; usually associated with intercity routes.

Capital Expense

Nonrecurring or infrequently recurring costs of long-term assets, such as land, guideways, stations, buildings, and vehicles. These items must have a useful life of at least one year, and are subject to depreciation and inventory records.

Charter Service

Transportation service offered to the public on an exclusive group basis. It is provided with a vehicle engaged at a specific price for the trip or a period of time, usually on a reservation or contractual basis.

Commuter Rail Service

The portion of passenger railroad operations that carries passengers within urban areas, or between urban areas and their suburbs. Heavier passenger cars and longer average trip lengths carried out over tracks that are part of the railroad system characterize this service.

Commuter Service

Public transportation provided on a regularly scheduled basis with emphasis on peak periods to serve work or school trip purposes. Large vehicles, higher speeds, few stops, and longer distances characterize this service.

County Transportation Authority (CTA)

A municipal corporation of the state of Washington, created pursuant to Chapter 36.57 RCW. These corporations must be countywide with a board comprised of three mayors and three county commissioners.

Dedicated Funding Source

A funding source, which by state or federal law, is available for use only to support a specific purpose, and cannot be diverted to other uses; e.g., the federal gasoline tax can only be used for highway investments and, since 1983, for transit capital projects.

Demand Response or Dial-A-Ride Service

Public transportation service characterized by flexible routing and scheduling of relatively small vehicles to provide door-to-door or point-to-point transportation at the passenger's request. Sometimes referred to as "ParaTransit."

Express Service

Public transportation service with a limited number of stops, either from a collector area directly to a specific destination or in a particular corridor with stops en route to major transfer points or activity centers. This service usually uses freeways or busways where they are available.

Fare

The required payment for a ride on a public transportation vehicle. It may be paid by any acceptable means including cash, token, ticket, transfer, farecard, voucher, or pass.

Fare Policy

Action taken by the transit agency to regulate the schedule of fees for its services by category of passenger, period of use, zones, and/or type of service.

Farebox Recovery Ratio

Total farebox revenue, plus contract service revenue, divided by total direct operating expenses.

Farebox Revenue

Income from payments for rides, including cash, farecards, tickets, tokens, pass receipts, and transfer and zone charges, but excluding charter services.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

An agency of the United States Department of Transportation that administers federal programs of financial assistance for public transportation through the Federal Transit Act. It replaced the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA).

Feeder Service

Local transportation service that provides passengers with connections to mainline public transportation services or transit centers.

Fixed Route Service

Public transportation on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping for passengers along the way.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

Total employee hours divided by 2,080 hours. This is not the number of employees. Two employees each working halftime, or 1,040 hours in a year would be one FTE.

High Capacity Transportation (HCT)

Express or commuter service that operates on exclusive right of way, such as rail, busways, and HOV lanes.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

A vehicle transporting more persons than its operator, such as a bus, vanpool, or carpool.

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)

Electronics, communications, or information processing used singly or in combination to improve the efficiency or safety of a surface transportation system.

Intermodal Facility

A structure used by passengers to move from one to another transportation mode or type of service.

Light Rail Service

A passenger railway system characterized by its ability to operate single cars or short trains along rails on exclusive rights of way.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The areawide agency responsible for conducting coordinated urbanized transportation planning consistent with federal rules. Together with WSDOT, it carries out the planning and programming activities necessary for federal funding.

Minibus

A smaller bus, usually with a passenger compartment built on a truck or recreational vehicle chassis, a life expectancy of four to eight years, and with seating capacity of eight to 25 passengers.

Minivan

A smaller van, usually with a life expectancy of four years, with seating capacity of five passengers.

Mobile Data Transmitter (MDT)

Transponders that are similar to Automatic Vehicle Locators, but are capable of transmitting more specific information in addition to location. MDT's are useful for communicating various transit related information between fleet vehicles and dispatch.

Operating Costs

The recurring expenses of providing public transportation service. They include: all employees' wages and salaries; operating supplies such as fuel and oil; contractors' charges for services; taxes; repair and maintenance services, parts and supplies; marketing; and insurance. They usually exclude fixed costs such as depreciation on plant and equipment, and interest paid on loans on capital equipment.

Other Annual Revenue

Revenue earned by activities not associated with the system's services, such as sales of maintenance services, rental of vehicles and buildings, non-transit parking lots, sale of advertising space, and investment income.

Paratransit

Flexible forms of public transportation services that are not provided over a fixed route or fixed schedule. They do not include exclusory services such charter bus trips. Sometimes referred to as "demand response" or "Dial-A-Ride."

Passenger Trip

One person making a one-way trip from origin to destination. If the person transfers to another vehicle or mode of travel en route to the final destination, that is another trip. One round trip is two passenger trips. One round trip on two buses each way is four passenger trips.

Peak Hour

The period(s) when traffic or passenger demand is the greatest.

Public Transportation

Transportation service that is available to any person upon payment of the fare—if charged—and which cannot be reserved for the private or exclusive use of one individual or group. “Public” in this sense refers to the access to the service, not to the ownership of the system providing the service.

Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)

A municipal corporation of the state of Washington, created pursuant to Chapter 36.57A RCW. These corporations may be less than county-wide, countywide, or comprise more than one county.

Revenue Vehicle Hour

The measurement in hours that a public transportation system operates each vehicle in fixed route services (not including time to or from the assigned route), or makes demand response services available for public use.

Revenue Vehicle Mile

The measurement in miles that a public transportation system operates each vehicle (not including the distance to or from the assigned route).

Ridesharing

A form of transportation, other than public transportation, in which two or more persons share in the use of a vehicle, such as a car or van, to make a trip.

Right of Way (ROW)

A general term denoting land, property, or interest therein, usually in a strip, acquired for or devoted to transportation purposes.

Route Deviated Service

Public transportation service on a nonexclusive basis, that operates along a public way, on a fixed route, from which it may deviate from time to time, in response to a demand for service or to take a passenger to a destination, after which it returns to its fixed route.

Rural Areas

Incorporated and unincorporated communities and unincorporated areas in a county outside of a designated urbanized area. Total area population may exceed 50,000.

SAFETEA-LU

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, is the acronym for the new federal funding requirements established by Congress in 2005 affecting transportation. The sections of the bill impact all aspects of public transportation including: special needs populations that rely on public transportation, coordination and planning, safety and security, environmental provisions, alternative fuels, intermodal transportation, and tribal transportation needs. Some of the SAFETEA-LU sections introduce new guidelines and programs, and other programs are enhanced through more direct funding.

Seating Capacity

The number of passenger seats, not including the driver or operator’s seat, in a vehicle.

Section 5307

A section of the Federal Transit Act authorizing formula funding for public transportation in urbanized areas, and codified as 49 USC 5307.

Section 5309

A section of the Federal Transit Act authorizing discretionary and formula funding for capital purposes, and codified as 49 USC 5309.

Section 5311

A section of the Federal Transit Act authorizing funding for public transportation in rural areas, and codified as 49 USC 5311.

Small City

A single city or cluster of cities including adjoining unincorporated areas of urban density with a combined population between 20,000 and 200,000.

Specialized Transportation Service

Rides provided to elderly persons or persons with disabilities through a variety of agencies, including social services and public transportation agencies. Persons may ride in minibuses, taxis, and/or volunteer drivers using their own vehicle.

TEA-21

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century superseded ISTEA in 1998. It continued the new vision for surface transportation in the United States with funding authorized for highways, highway safety, and public transportation through 2003.

Transit Development Plan (TDP)

A 6-year plan, required by Section 35.58.2795 RCW, that outlines the intended timetable for public transportation services, including a detailed program of revenues and expenditures for capital equipment acquisition, system management, and operations.

Transit Center

A transit stop or station at the meeting point of several routes or of different modes of transportation.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Policies, programs, and actions to increase the use of high occupancy vehicles (public transportation, carpools, and vanpools) and/or spread the travel to less congested time periods.

Urbanized Area

A geographic area of 50,000 population or more, defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, with a central city and surrounding closely settled patterns. Small urbanized areas have populations between 50,000 and 200,000; large urbanized areas have greater populations.

Vanpool

A prearranged ridesharing service in which a number of people (7 to 15) travel together regularly in a van, particularly to and from work.

